

果南・ダイヤ・鞠莉編

公野櫻子

イラスト+伊能津/清瀬赤目

ラブライブ!
School idol diary
★サブシャイン!!



Matsuura Kanan / Kurosawa Dia / Ohara Mari

Love Live! Sunshine!! School Idol Diary

Aqours' Sea Side Diary

Written by Sakurako Kimino, Illustrated by Shin Inou, Akame Kiyose

Translated by Daxing Dan, Raws from Anonymous

07 - Kanan Matsuura



I'm Always Number Two

My house is on an island off the coast of Uchiura.

There used to be a ropeway that could take you across the sea and to the mainland, but one day, it broke down from age, and ever since then, the boat's been the only way to get on or off the island.

But, the island is right there in plain sight, well within swimming distance, so the trip takes just 3 minutes by boat.

Feels like you just step on, then step right off ♪

And on that island - it's called Awashima - There's a quiet, local diving shop.

That's my house.

The shop is staffed by my grandfather, the instructor/owner, along with his assistant/granddaughter, me.

It's a little shop run just by us two, but apparently it operated on a larger scale back in the day, when my parents were still around. But, now that they're gone, my grandfather really just runs the store as a hobby now.

My parents, who were supposed to inherit the shop from my grandfather, well, they liked diving a lot, too.

They loved beautiful seas, which is why they moved to Ichiomote Island, part of the Yaeyama archipelago in Okinawa.

Now, they run a diving shop over there.

But, that's just the way things are.

Nowadays, the waters of the Suruga Bay, here in Ito, have grown clearer and prettier than they used to be, and in there, you can find the impressive striped beakfish and cute pearl-spot chromis swimming in schools, as well as rays, and even sunfish, if you're lucky.

But, they just can't compare to the coral reefs of Okinawa ♥

Of course, I love the beautiful seas too, and I couldn't decide whether or not to go with them, but the problem is, there's no high school over there, so I ended up staying here.

Besides, I'd be worried, leaving my grandpa here by myself.

My grandfather is a veteran in the business, one of the first divers in Japan, and he used to publish underwater photo collections. Every now and then, people show up because they want to dive with him or because they heard he could give them diving lessons, so typically, he has dives scheduled each weekend.

So, I'm always helping him out with that.

Here's how a weekend goes for me at the diving shop.

First, I wake up early in the morning and count the new air tanks that came in yesterday.

Then, I check the weather.

Once I record the wind direction, wave height, air temperature, and water temperature in the logbook, I change into my wetsuit and start the engine on the jet skis.

I go to check the diving spot for the day.

I do bring a little air tank with me, just in case, but it's not that deep, so I just free dive, wearing only some weights around my waist.

When it's just 10 meters or so, that's how I always do it.

With my mask and snorkel on, I stretch my body out and bring my arms together above my head as I face the sea floor.

I quietly steady my breathing as my body bobs on the surface like a raft.

Once I can hear my own breath hissing through the tube of my snorkel between the splashing of the waves, that's the sign that I'm ready to dive.



Then I bend my body at a sharp 90 degree angle, as if bowing, and cut a path into the water.

It's like slicing into a giant mass of water. It feels so good to do a jack knife dive into the sea.

In this world, surrounded by water, I'm instantly enveloped in a silent stillness.

The water is really just so clear and beautiful on the first dive of the morning. The water's chilly, like spring came 2 months late, but that doesn't even bother me now.

Diving straight down, I scan the sea floor in search of my destination.

The typical landmark I look for is a large rock. A school of fish are playing there.

Shining waters clearer than anywhere on the west coast, ivory-white coral reefs, and the colorful southern fish... would make for far better scenery than this.

But, when I'm down here, the sapphire-colored waters of Uchiura look pretty good, too ♪ I think to myself as I watch the clownfish play among the sea anemones growing in the crevices.

I check several points, looking for anything unusual or dangerous.

With the octopuses hiding beneath large rocks, striped beakfish slowly swimming about, and the neverending swarms of flathead mullets making slick black streamlines through the water, the seas of Ito have some charm of their own.

If nothing's amiss, I send up my buoy with its flag, drop my weights, and call it day.

Grandpa should be coming over with his customers after noon, I think to myself.

I kick my flippers, heading for the shining surface.

I'm there.

As soon as my head pushes through that light, a loud splash enters my ears.

And, with it, the sound of waves, the sound of wind, the cries of seagulls, and distant steam whistles.

In one moment, I've returned from the stillness in the water and into the world filled with sound.

It's always a jarring moment, when I realize that I've been travelling through a different world.

But, on that day, something else also happened at that moment.

"Ooh, there you are ♥ Hey, Kanan! Over here, over here! Over here!!"

I hear someone's voice ringing out.

I grab onto the little buoy and turn to look at the glittering beach.

But, I already know who that voice belongs to before I turn around.

There's only one person crazy enough to call out to me while I'm this far offshore, and underwater to boot.

Someone with a voice that's loud enough - unbelievably, thunderously loud enough - to travel all the way from the shore to me.

Spinning around, I lightly kick my fins again to push myself as far out of the water as possible, and slowly wave to her.

I don't say a thing.

The reason is, I'm not so sure I can yell loud enough for Chika to hear me from so far away.

And then...

"Hey, can you come over here!? Let's play!" Chika half sings, half shouts to me as she jumps about the beach. Instead of shouting back, I signal OK to her by making a large circle above my head with my arms, and start swimming over.

Ah, it takes me back.

When we were little, Chika would call to me like this all the time.



I'm Always Number Two (Part 2)

When I was younger, I couldn't help out at the shop.

Even so, I still hung out at the beach a lot.

On the weekends, especially, the whole family would go out to sea to run the lessons and fun dives, and they couldn't just leave me alone in the house.

Is it just the fate of those in the leisure industry, that everyone else's holidays are work days for us?

Some days, I'd ride a rubber boat out into the water and went snorkeling all day long, and on other days I'd stay around the rocky edge of the beach and caught some little fish and shrimp.

If I got bored, I'd go digging through the sand.

Ahahaha♥♥

This is totally making me sound like one of those country girls with too much free time.

But, usually, as I spent my day there...

Someone would come by.

I think it was usually around 10, after all the morning work was done.

As I sat on the sand, gazing at the sea, I would hear a cheery voice coming from behind me.

“Oh, there you are♥♥ Let’s play, Kanan!”

I already know who it is, even before I turned around.

That’s Chika’s voice.

“You’re back! Are you done with homework already?” I turned around and asked, startling Chika a little.

“H-Homework? I can just do that tonight! Come on, Kanan, you think you’re my mom or something?”

Chika’s a year younger than me. Back then, she’d just started 2nd grade, and had apparently gotten in trouble for not doing any of her homework.

“I didn’t mean it that way. But you told be before that you skipped so much homework that the teacher called your parents, and now, on the weekends, after you finish cleaning the reception hall, they make you do your homework and show them before you’re allowed to leave the house.” I said as I kicked at the water with my bare feet.

“Huh, did I tell you that?♥♥ Ehehe♪ Well, yeah, you’re right, but maybe it’s ‘cause we had a lot of guests today, but my mom totally forgot to check my homework♥♥ So, I snuck out!

“Kishishi!” laughs Chika happily.

Oh man.

They’re just gonna get mad at her when she goes home tonight, then.

But, I’d already done everything there is to do on the beach, and I was getting bored now, so I was a bit happy that Chika was here.

Deciding not to press any further, I said, “You bored?”

Frustrated, Chika pouted, “Yeah! Super duper bored! There’s nobody for me to play with. My sisters are out having fun or helping out at home, all the neighbors are out, and You’s busy with diving practice.”

Then why don’t you do your homework? I thought to myself.

“And that’s why you’re here?”

Chika's family runs an inn.

Both of our families are busy during vacation days, so we're left to ourselves on the weekends.

This always happens.

I think Chika thought that she'd at least be able to find me out here.

"So, what should we do?"

I made some room for her and smiled, and Chika smiled back.

"Baseball!"

One of her front teeth was missing, creating a gap in her smile.

She looked kinda goofy.

"Huh? Baseball!?"

Reacting to my surprise, Chika whipped out a bat and gloves with a *ta-dah!*

"I brought all the gear♥ I'll be the batter, and you can be the pitcher! Bring it on! I'm gonna hit a home run!♪♪"

Chika happily got into a batting stance.

I followed Chika's lead, making space between the two of us.

I put on the glove, and drew my arm back, holding the ball.

Across from me, Chika readied her bat, looking so serious that she might catch on fire.

I threw.

She swung.

Oh, it's a hit!

With a dull thud, the ball went flying.

It whizzed through the sky in a soft parabola, heading for... the sea.

A moment later, I heard a splash, and saw the white ball floating in the waves.

“Aaaahh!” Chika lets out a pitiful noise.

Well, that’s what happens when you play “baseball” with just two people.

There’s nobody on defense.

I started laughing at our own stupidity.

Still giggling, I said, “Well, I’ll go get it.”

I was wearing my swimsuit under my clothes, so I went into the water to grab the ball.

Chika stared gloomily at the ball drifting back and forth with the waves.

Leaving her behind, I waded through the waves and grabbed the ball, bringing it back to the beach.

“Maybe we shouldn’t play baseball,” Chika said, sitting on the beach dejectedly.

“If only we had one more person!” She whispered. I wasn’t sure if she



was just sour, or if she was serious.

Even if we were playing triangle baseball, we’d still need a catcher, a first baseman, and a third baseman, making a total of three, though.

“Yeah, that’s too bad!” I bent down next to Chika and smiled at her.

Encouraged, Chika continued, “Seriously, we never have enough people around here! It sucks! You think anyone else is gonna stop by? I don’t think You’s gonna come, though. She’s probably already practicing by now.”

As she muttered to herself, she looked up and down the highway running along the beach.

The highway, on a weekend morning.

Other than the occasional car passing by, we didn't see a single person.

And whenever a car seemed like it was about to stop, it was instead lured into the aquarium or the convenience store parking lot.

We did nothing but stare at the scenery.

Even so, whenever we heard a car, Chika would stand up and turn around, scanning the area.

After a while...

"Nobody's coming," Chika whispered.

"Yeah," I replied with a smile.

After all, I always sit on this beach until all the diving is done. I knew this would happen.

And besides...

Although Chika's grumbling about how nobody's coming, and I do feel sorry for her, Chika's right here for me.

I think I had it better than Chika right then.

"Nobody at all!" I laughed. A bit confused, Chika looked at me, but soon enough, she started laughing too.

"Seriously, this sucks! If everyone left for their trips sooner, they'd be back by now..." Chika said, standing up.

She dusted off the sand on her skirt and clapped her hands.

"Okay, then, how about we write down, 'Recruiting teammates!' on the beach real big, so people can see it from far away?" Chika grinned, and grabbed a small piece of driftwood.

Then, she started running across the beach

RECRUITING BASEBALL TEAM

LET'S HIT SOME HOME RUNS TOGETHER ⚾

She wrote across the entire beach.

An empty beach, and Chika's message.

I started running with her.

In some places, I traced over Chika's writing, and in some places I drew borders around them.

JERSEY NO. 1 CAPTAIN CHIKA TAKAMI

JERSEY NO. 2 PITCHER KANAN MATSUURA

JERSEY NO. 3 SOMEONE PLEASE COME HERE!

At some point, we started having so much fun doodling, it just became a game.

We played tic-tac-toe, doodled, followed those how-to-draw songs, and lied down to make sand angels in the beach, covering ourselves in sand.

Before we knew it, the beach was covered in our footprints.

And as for ourselves...

"Oh crap! There's sand all over me!"

Seeing the sand covering her from head to toe, Chika started crying about how her mom was gonna get mad at her.

"I've got the perfect solution for that♪"

I charged toward the water, dragging Chika by the hand.

Chika screamed in surprise, but she cheered up as I started running.

We kicked water about as we ran into the water.

Then, I tickled her, and knocked her over, sending her splashing into the water.



“Eeeek!♥” Chika shrieked in joy.

Looking at her, I said, “Just tell her that I pushed you into the water.”

Sopping wet, and sitting in the knee-deep pond, Chika said, “You really think she’ll buy that? My mom’s really strict!”

Laughing, she then swept my feet out from under me.

“Yah!”

Her surprise attack knocked me off balance, toppling me.

“Aaaahhh!”

As Chika howled in laughter, I fell head-first into the water, soaking me completely.

Looking at each other, we laughed again.

Just another idle weekend for us.



Now that I think about it, our being in Aqours together might be a continuation of that.

I think to the wind as I swim towards Chika on the beach.

She’s always up to something.

When there’s anything she can’t do alone, Chika starts looking for others to join her.

And, whenever that happens, I’m always next to Chika, with nothing better to do, so I always end up becoming her second member.

Actually, I don't think there's been a lot of times when she comes up to me and asks me to join.

It just ends up that way.

Chika makes me join her.

No, actually, I join her.

Baseball, games at the beach, tag, and dodgeball.

Chika always wants to do things that need a group, and she's always unhappy that our town has so few kids.

I didn't want to see her suffering or giving up.

So, I'd always agree to play with her.

Because I wanted to see her smile.

Otherwise, I'd just be jumping into the water, anyway♥♥

I never imagined that our two-man baseball games would turn into this school idol stuff when we grew up, though.

I think that if people other than me can see Chika's smile, then I've done good enough.

For some reason, seeing Chika smile cheers me up.

It brings cheer to me, when I'd always been alone on the beach, Well, even if it wasn't my intention to do this, I'm a school idol now, so I've gotta cheer people up with my smile, too.

Hm, is my smile really that powerful?

I swim towards the beach.

Unable to wait any longer, Chika starts shouting. "Hey! Come on! We've got a demo of our new music video ready! Riko made it, and everyone's on their way! I knew you'd be here, so I woke up early to get you♪"

This beach is where Chika and I always meet up.



We never plan out the time or anything in advance.
But, for some reason, this is where it always begins.
I always end up becoming Chika's second member.
In the good times, and the bad times.

I've always been thankful to Chika for being here for me, but that's a secret that I've never told her.



08 - Dia Kurosawa

A Sheltered Princess's Future

Someone's stomping up the staircase.

"Sis! Sis! Siiiis!"

Oh...

I already knew who it was, even before I heard that voice.

That's my noisy little sister.

The rumbling of footsteps gets closer, then stops. The next moment, the door to my room flies open 180 degrees.

"Sis, is it true that you're having a marriage meeting!?"

Can't she be quiet?

"Ruby, haven't I told you to knock before entering a room? Not only that, you were so loud coming up here that I would have thought an elephant was loose in the house. When you come upstairs, you need to

control your legs, and put more power into your inner thighs, like our dance instructor always tells-

Seated at my desk in the back of the room, I spin around in my chair to face her.

“Now’s not the time for that” Ruby interrupts me, rarely enough.

Standing imposingly in the middle of my room, she strikes her school bag once in frustration.

“Sis, are you really going to a marriage meeting?”

She takes two tottering steps towards me, then a third, while staring menacingly at me, then, suddenly...

She starts tearing up.

“You... You can’t do that! If you’re gone, I’ll... Waaaaahhh!”

My little sister collapses onto her knees.

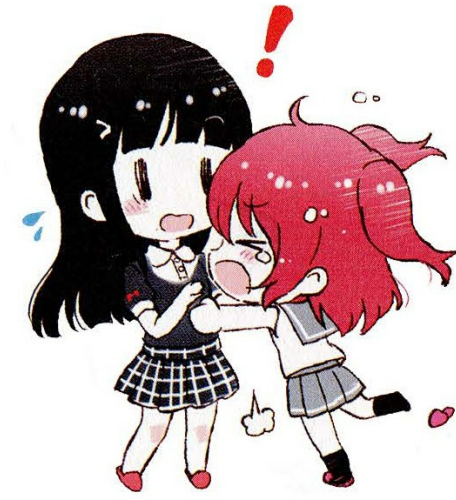
Ugh, again?

She’s always like this.

Whenever something happens, she runs around, raises a huge fuss, and when I think she’s angry, she starts crying. She’s like an emotionally unstable puppy.

I slowly stand up next to Ruby and quietly pat her on the head.

“Come on, don’t cry over this nonsense. It’s just a rumor, and even if it were true, it’s not that big of a deal anyway. Now, what happened? I thought you already left school while I was busy doing student council work, so why did you get home so late? Were you taking some detour again? You know better than that♥ Keep that up and some day, somebody’s going to abduct you” I gently say to her.



“S-Sis...”

Unable to hold it in any longer, Ruby starts crying.

Seriously, she’s such a crybaby.

“You don’t have to cry. It’s not your problem anyway. And even if it were true, it’s not something so major that you need to crash your way through the house.”

That’s right.

It’s not a big deal.

I whisper in my heart.

I am the first daughter of the Kurosawa family.

Marriages, inheritances...

There’s always been talk of such things around me ever since I was a little girl. This is nothing new to me.

It’s nothing to raise such a fuss over, and when the day finally comes, I’ll simply follow my fate.



My family, the Kurosawa family, has lived in Uchiura for 15 generations as the *amimoto* family.

An *amimoto* is someone who, in the old days, owned nets, boats, and expensive fishing tools, and employed many fishermen to earn massive profits. They held quite some power within their region.

The equivalent of a modern capitalist, you see.

Of course, the *amimoto* system is long gone now, but even in an age without hired fishermen or tenant farmers, a similar economic system persists in a different form.

Capitalists and laborers.

Regardless of the era, those who own property will do everything they can to preserve their own fortunes. They take advantage of the workings of the world, changing their forms to survive.

After the dismantlement of the *amimoto* system, the Kurosawa family also used our accumulated funds to build hotels, hot springs, apartments, restaurants, souvenir shops, and so on. Of course, we're still in the fishery business where we started, as well.

Even though my own father doesn't even own a single fishing rod, he's now the head of the local fishery co-operative.

I don't really like those methods, but...

You can't choose the family you're born to.

Like it or not, I've benefited from its privileges throughout my life.

I've never been in want of food, of course, and I take many lessons, and I wear fancy kimonos, and every day the shops send fresh candies to our house. To put it bluntly, I've been spoiled rotten.

Just because I'm a girl, there was never any need for me to be especially smart or talented, either. To simply have a brilliant education in how to adorn myself, and keep myself neat and proper, as the most radiant flower of the village, that is all that is required of the daughter of an old house.

Even so, I've still been raised knowing that I have a duty to fulfill as a member of the family.

Something like *noblesse oblige* , from the olden times, though I wouldn't say it goes that far.

To keep our coffers full, and at the same time create jobs in the local economy to keep families all over town fed, that is what is required from a longstanding local family.

If the engine stops, then many people will be left in the dark, so somebody has to get the job done.

Even though it seems exploitative, someone has to uphold the system and keep it from breaking down. That's what I've been taught.

Because I am the first daughter of the main family.

That's why I've prepared myself to adequately fulfill my role.

To my parents, I am their daughter, their pride.

To the town, I am the revered lady of the house of the *amimoto* .

In the future, I'll marry a respectable man, and inherit the businesses of the Kurosawa family.

As long as I fulfill the role and functions expected of me, everyone will be at ease, isn't that right?

So, even it may seem that I was born into privilege, I have no freedom in my future.

I must inherit my family, inherit the family businesses, and watch over Uchiura.

That's something nobody else can do and it's probably my greatest duty.

To defy my fate would be to abandon Uchiura.

Oh,

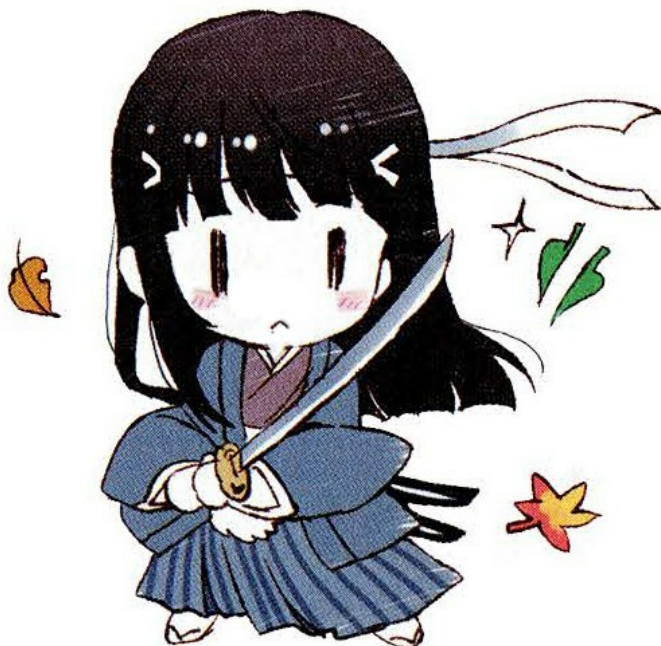
Of course, my little sister Ruby is also qualified to carry out that duty, but...

Hehe♥♥

But, anyone could tell she's not cut out for it, right?

I think if my only alternative is to foist my duties onto her, I'll just do it myself.

Only one sacrifice needs to be made.



I know I have what it takes to get the job done, and everyone else thinks so too.

As long as I am here to keep watch, I just need something to watch over.

Well, it's not as if I don't have any wishes of my own.

It's just, I'd already given up on all of that a long time ago.

I believe my life exists so that I can devote it to my duty.

To protect my family and my home.

Maybe the children of samurai in older times would have these thoughts some days too.



Ruby glares at me from across the dinner table, sulking with a puffy face.

"Ruby, there's a grain of rice stuck to your cheek"

She ignores my remark and remains puffed-up.

“You’re not going to any marriage meeting, are you?”

She’s still upset about that?

I’m so fed up with Ruby’s persistence that reflexively put down the chopsticks I’d been using to eat sea bream sashimi.

My parents are out again, at a meeting for the local commerce and industry association.

It’s just us two sisters, eating a dinner provided by our housekeeper.

“Didn’t I tell you earlier today? That’s just a rumor. And besides, I’ve been hearing talk of marriage meetings 24 hours a day ever since I started high school. You just never noticed until now. It’s just, Father isn’t the type to sell off his darling treasure for too low a price, so it’s never gone past the planning stage. I’m sure it won’t amount to anything this time, either, so you don’t have to worry, Ruby. Where did you even hear that, anyway? You never listen to anything anyone has to say, except this once...”

“Well, Maru told me. The head priest of the temple was talking with one of the parishioners yesterday. They said there was a rumor that the Kurosawa girl was going to have a marriage meeting, and they were going to decide whether to have the ceremony at the Buddhist temple or Shinto shrine. Nobody ever told me about that!” Ruby argues, with her lip trembling.



“I told you, there’s a grain of rice on your cheek!”
I look away for a moment.

Then, I remove the grain of rice next to Ruby's mouth and wipe it off on a tissue.

She's making a bitter expression.

Give me a break.

This insubstantial gossip is the reason why she's been ranting with rice stuck to her face?

I've had enough of this.

"How many times do I have to tell you? It's just more gossip from the townsfolk. In a rural village like these, there's a lot of gossip going around with no basis in reality. Maybe you should get used to it already? As part of the Kurosawa family, people are always going to be paying some attention to us and making up stories about people like us."

Ruby, looking not quite satisfied with my answer, continues to glare at me.

"So you're really not going to a marriage meeting? You're not gonna go get married and leave me here?"

Not even I can stop my jaw from dropping at that one.

"Get married? Hold on, now. You know I'm still in high school, right? That wouldn't happen, and I'd never..."

Ruby, why do you care whether or not I get married, anyway? is what I want to say next.

But, when I see the tears welling up in her eyes again, I decide not to.

My goodness, this girl...

To her, I'm just her naggy big sister who's always getting on her case. We don't even like each other that much.

"It's okay, I'm not going to leave you. I'll be sticking around to nag you for a while longer, so don't worry," I say, looking away to scoop up another spoonful of *chawanmushi* .

My little sister Ruby has a little heart, and she's so afraid of being alone that she gets teary just thinking about me going away, even though all we ever do is fight.

What's she going to do if I ever move out for real someday?

I decide not to keep that question to myself.

“Phew, that's a relief♥ So, you're not gonna get married? I couldn't believe my ears when Maru told me about it! I felt so bad for you I wanted to cry!”

Ruby finally calms down and smiles slightly.

Wait...

Huh?

She felt bad for me?

Her smile grows, and while her nose is red from rubbing it so many times, she continues, “You've always been real smart, and you want to go to university in another prefecture, but if you had a marriage meeting, then you wouldn't be able to go anymore, right? I didn't want to let that happen... I'm stupid, and I don't even know if I can get into college or not, so I'd take your place, but if they were arranging a marriage meeting for me, then they'd definitely reject me and send me in for a refund before it got anywhere, and besides, I don't want to go to a marriage meeting either...”

W-When did she-?



I'm shocked silent by the discovery that Ruby knew about that tiny dream that I've kept within my heart, and never told anyone about.

"And, I know you'd never ever marry some guy you've never met and don't even like, even if our parents told you to. If that ever actually happened, you'd get in a fight or run away, but then that would mean you'd leave home anyway, right? So, I was freaking out because I didn't know what I'd do without you..."

I watch as Ruby laughs, "Ehehehe♪," but I still can't figure out what to say.

"That's a relief, Sis♥ If they ever start talking about a marriage meeting for real, let me know and I'll go raise heck for you, okay? Don't give up too easily! You're a good student, but I worry about you because you try too hard to do what other people tell you to do."

Maybe that's why I'm so dumbfounded.

Little sisters are such tough creatures...



That night, I think to myself as I stare at the stars twinkling in the night sky.

I'd always thought that I was meant to protect the Kurosawa family and Uchiura.

But, there's more than one way to protect them.

I'd always known that deep inside,

But, maybe I was actually far more cowardly,, thickheaded, foolish, and afraid of being alone than Ruby.

I thought the best life for me was to act out my role as the perfect student and successor that my parents wanted from me.

Me, the cool, perfect student.

I think, maybe, in the end, I was only directing my eyes towards the oldest, most stereotypical method.

The moon was a thin crescent that night.

Even that tiny moon shone with a beautiful, translucent white glow.

I felt like it was revealing a new world to me.

The full moon is so large that it looks as if it could fall down from the sky at any moment, but it isn't the only source of beauty.

You can always find beauty in the night sky.

Maybe proceeding down the straight path as an unmarred, perfect student might not be the only way to carry on my role.

Maybe, like Ruby, I can inherit it with completely different thinking and methods than before.

I think that might be the newest and most beautiful sight I'll see.

Regardless... yeah.

If a marriage meeting ever comes up, I just have to run away from home.



I never thought about that.

I should write that down in case I need it.



09 - Mari Ohara

My First Matching Outfit≡

“It’s done! Aqours now has its first set of costumes!”

Chika jumps over to the poolside with a little dance, followed by Riko, Ruby, Maru, and the rest of the costume-making team.

They’ve come rushing in clutching clusters of fabric of white, aqua blue, yellow, purple, and all sorts of other colors against their chest.

So cute♪

It’s July.

We’ve all gathered at the poolside after the rain let up. It’s still wet in places, reflecting the light of the sun.

The place is glittering.

Glittering with the light of all our smiles, that is.



“C’mon, let me see♥♥”

“Wow, which one’s mine?”

“Oh, this one’s so cute! I wanna try it on!”

All of them start cheering.

And what about mine?

I go to take a peek.

I’m curious to see what sort of costumes Japanese school idols wear♪

When it comes to my music tastes, I’ve always been a much bigger fan of hard rock and heavy metal.

But, now that I’m a member of Aqours, well, I can’t resist checking out the costumes!

I am a girl, after all♪

A studded leather jacket, a T-shirt with a silver skull print, ripped jeans and black makeup... would be asking for too much, but if we’re going on stage, we’ve gotta be wearing something *beautiful* and *amazing* and *fantastic* ♥♥♥♥

“Uh... this?”

Sorry.

That’s the first thing that comes out of my mouth when I see my first costume.

So funny ...

What catches my eye is a costume based off of a sailor uniform, with a patchwork skirt in bold colors and multiple layers of frills around the hem,

puffy sleeves like something a princess in a fantasy anime would wear, and various parts of aqua blue, yellow, pink, and red, plus a shooting star applique.

Wow, just one costume and it's already so colorful !

I slowly raise my head, reflexively looking over everyone's faces.

My costume has a bright purple, pink, and white accessory, and a white peplum around the waist that looks a bit like a child's apron, and even a huge ribbon.

But, the others have already happily begun discussing their costumes.

It's so cute, they're so happy, they can't wait to try them on...

"Uh, should I really be wearing this?" I whisper quietly.

Ruby stammers out in reply, "Uh, yeah, yours might look a bit small around the bust, but don't worry! I've taken everything into account and made it according to your measurements, so nothing you do should rip it, even if your chest grows a little, no matter how much you dance♥"

She blushes slightly and smiles as she talks.

I can't help but pat her on the head.

My little baby , she's like a puppy♪

"Really? No worries there, then♥" I say, continuing to stare at the costume in my hands.



Hmmm.

Okay, yeah, I'm gonna have to wear this.

Isn't it a bit too *lovely* for me?

Well, yeah, I have thought that Japanese school idols looked cute and childlike before, but now it's like I'm really...

As I start freezing up a little, someone calls out to me from behind.

"You know, I think you'd look good in it," laughs my classmate Kanan.

"... You think so?" I say haltingly. "It's a really cute costume, and it's definitely looks like a Japanese idol costume, but don't you think it's a bit... too *cute* for me?"

Kanan fails to hold in a giggle.

"Shh! Stop, what if someone hears you?"

I wave my hands, causing her to laugh even harder.

"You care about that now? You sure have changed, Mari," she says, causing me to turn bright red.

"N-No I haven't."

I start thinking about the old me.

I'd lived abroad for a long time, and tended to be very direct in talking, so I didn't get along too well with the other kids. So, I decided I had enough of that and spent a lot of time alone. Back, then, Kanan, who lived on the same island, would often come looking for me.

Thanks for that, Kanan... I try to say that out loud, and Kanan gives me a great, big smile.

"Yeah, the way you are now, that cute costume's gonna look perfect on you."

"R-Really?" I say nervously. I still don't believe it.

After all, I'll admit Kanan's pretty, and maybe it's because she's a diver, but she's athletic and she has a nice body. That said, she typically

dresses in wetsuits and sportswear. To be honest, I don't have too much faith in her fashion sense.

“Right, I'll get someone else.”

Is anyone there? When I look around, I see Yohane attempting to combine a pair of large black cosplay wings with her costume.

Next to her, You's got her skirt on already, and she's jumping around to check if her underpants will show. There's also...

Dia, who's staring at the costume in her hands and looking surprisingly pleased.

This won't work.

None of these people can give me a level-headed opinion on my costume!

I'm in a pinch.

I ended up trying it on.

“ *Wow* , it's a surprisingly better fit than it looked♪”

It looks super flashy, but I'm shocked at how comfortable it feels.

Ruby clears her throat and holds her chest out with pride.

“Idols have to dance a lot in their costumes, after all. You definitely don't want a costume that's hard to move in, so I was eeeextra careful about that♥”

I see, so this outfit reveals its true worth when you're dancing♪

I get into the mood and do a turn right there.

The skirt gently flutters about.

I can't help but say, “ *Wow* ♥”



The peplum bounces, and the frills float up.

The large ribbon dances about the well-fitted bust of my blouse.

Then, I finally realize it.

Oh♥

I get it now.

It's like my eyes have finally been opened.

I go again.

This time, I do a double turn.

Then, the peplum, the one I thought looked like a child's apron, fans out like an umbrella as I move.

I feel like I could take to the skies.

“So that's how it works.”

Only now do I realize why idols' costumes have all those frills and ribbons and fluttery bits.

It's strangely impressive♪

I feel sorry for making fun of it♥♥

I'm so affected by this point that I'd never noticed before, that I pat *my little baby* Ruby on the head one more time.

“Great work, Ruby. So this is the power of a true idol fan♥ Ooh, how about we all dance together, then?”

I drag Ruby by the hand and run off.

It's off to our practice grounds.

“Waaah! Stop, Mari, you're going too fast! Slow down or I'm gonna trip!”

Someone's talking behind me, but none of it registers.

I head up to the rooftop, where we have the gentle winds of early summer, and a view of the ocean.



The sea breeze rushes through my hair as soon as I throw the door open.

The rooftop is the highest point on the cape. It stands amidst a field of greens and blues, and there's always wind blowing around.

“The perfect place to air out our skirts, right?”

I wink at Ruby as she's rubbing her ankles after desperately trying to keep her balance, and she nods back with a twinkle in her eye.



The rest of the team comes up behind us.

I play the first song that Aqours made together.

We start in a ring formation, then spread out and dance to our hearts' content.

As we do so, the frills of our skirts spread out as well.

When I first joined, I wasn't so happy with this dance and its childish movements.

But, now I see what those motions mean.

‘Cause now, as I look at the other members while we dance in a circle,
their shining smiles look so cute♪

A matching dance, matching costumes.

And, matching smiles.

All our hearts are united as we dance on stage.

So, even our hearts are matching.

Even though we're just normal high school girls from a rural seaside town,

It looks like we're shining brighter than anything in the world.

I think that school idols know a spell to make girls cute.

A spell that can even cause a transformation like this to a girl who likes silver skulls, leather fashion and metal, who's never honest with her feelings.

I didn't like being in groups, there was nothing I disliked more than fitting in.

But, without even noticing it, I began to love smiling the same smile as the rest of the team.



Ah, it really feels like I could ride this umbrella-skirt sky-high.

One day, I'll fly over to your town♥

So, wait for me!

Ciao♪

